

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00

PA-02 SP-02 /027 W

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P 240948Z AUG 78

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO USICA WASHDC PRIORITY

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 0624

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 MANILA 14865

FOR SECSTATE EA/PHL; CINCPAC/ICA ADVISOR; USICA FOR EA
AND ECA

E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJECT: WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS - AUGUST 18-24, 1978

1. PSYCHOLOGICAL SITUATION

- A. PRESS BILL STIRS CONTROVERSY: PRESS REACTION HAS BEEN STRONG TO A BILL, "OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT," WHICH WAS INTRODUCED IN THE INTERIM NATIONAL ASSEMBLY BY PUBLIC INFORMATION MINISTER FRANCISCO TATAD AND MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENSE JUAN PONCE ENRILE. DESCRIBED AS AKIN TO AN OFFICIAL SECRET ACT, THE BILL DREW STRONG REACTION FROM SEVERAL MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY AS WELL. FROM THE FIRST DAY'S REPORTING ON THE BILL IN WHICH THE BULLETIN'S HEADLINE READ, "WOULD RESTRICT MEDIA FURTHER ON DISCLOSURE," UP TO THIS WRITING, A STEADY STREAM OF COMMENTS HAS COME OUT OF THE COLUMNISTS AND EDITORIAL WRITERS. FOR THE MOST PART, IT HAS BEEN CRITICAL OF THE INFORMATION MINISTER'S REACTION TO THE CRITICISM, WHICH HE HAS LABELED 'UNINFORMED.' COLUMNISTS POL BATALLA AND JESS BIGORNIA OF THE BULLETIN WERE BOTH MOVED TO SUGGEST THAT THE BILL UNDERScoreD THE NEED FOR UNCLASSIFIED

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A FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT IN THE PHILIPPINES. MOST WRITERS ECHOED THE SENTIMENTS OF DORY VALENCIA WHO SAID TODAY: "EVERYBODY IS SAYING WE HAVE NO FREEDOM OF THE PRESS. THEN WE LIMIT WHAT'S HERE* WHAT WILL BE LEFT?" WHILE ALL OF THIS APPEARS TO DEMONSTRATE HOW FREE THE PRESS IS TO CRITICIZE A MAJOR BILL PROPOSED BY TWO CABINET MINISTERS, THE RESULTS ARE NOT YET IN ON

THE BETTING IN SOME CIRCLES THAT THE WHOLE AFFAIR IS BEING STAGE-MANAGED FOR JUST THAT EFFECT.

- B. VETERANS ASSISTANCE IN THE NEWS; PRESS REPORTS THAT THE U.S. CONGRESS MAY ELIMINATE U.S. SUPPORT FOR THE VETERANS MEMORIAL MEDICAL HOSPITAL HERE ENGENDERED SOME COMMENT, SPEARHEADED BY VALENCIA. THE LATTER'S PREDICTABLE VIEW IS GOOD RIDDANCE, THE PHILIPPINES CAN NOW GO THEIR OWN, SELF-RELIANT WAY. NEWS STORIES, MEANWHILE, TENDED TO STRESS THAT VETERANS HERE WERE UPSET BY THE PROSPECT. THIS STORY MAY BE WITH US FOR AWHILE.

II. SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

- A. AMBASSADOR CALLS: AMBASSADOR MURPHY CONTINUED TO SCORE HEAVILY WITH THE INTELLECTUAL COMMUNITY, CALLING THIS WEEK ON DE LA SALLE UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT BRO. GABRIEL CANNON. HE HAD ALREADY MADE SIMILAR CALLS ON UP'S O.D. CORPUS AND ATENEO'S FR. JOSE CRUZ. THE AMBASSADOR, ACCOMPANIED BY THE CAO, SPOKE WITH LA SALLE'S TOP ADMINISTRATORS AS WELL AS BRO. GABRIEL AND MADE A QUICK CAMPUS TOUR. FEEDBACK ON THE VISITS SO FAR HAS BEEN POSITIVE, THE UNIVERSITY HEADS REPORTEDLY HIGHLY PLEASED THAT AN AMERICAN AMBASSADOR WOULD INCLUDE THEM IN HIS OFFICIAL CALLS. STILL TO COME: A VISIT TO
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THE UNIVERSITY OF SANTO TOMAS AND AN ADDRESS THIS WEEKEND AT SILLIMAN UNIVERSITY.

- B. VTR NEWS CLIPS: TV CLIP PLACEMENTS CONTINUED MEDIA SUPPORT OF OTHER MISSION ELEMENTS. POST CREW TAPED SIGNING OF AID-NATIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY LOAN AND PLACED CLIP ON FIVE MANILA CHANNELS. THE OPENING OF AN AID FUNDED FERTILITY CARE CENTER IN A MANILA LOW INCOME AREA DREW POST COVERAGE AND RESULTED IN PLACEMENT OF A THREE MINUTE SPOT ON THE EVENING NEWS. AND THE ICA MANILA PRODUCED FIVE PART SERIES ON WOMEN WORKING IN SKILLED JOBS AT THE SUBIC NAVAL BASE SHIP REPAIR FACILITY IS RUNNING NIGHTLY ON CHANNEL 9.

- C. SPECIAL REQUEST: JULIAN V. CRUZ, SPECIAL ASSISTANT OF THE PRESIDENTIAL PRESS STAFF, MINISTRY OF PUBLIC INFORMATION, MALACANANG PALACE REQUESTED INFORMATION FROM TJCC ON JODY POWELL AND HAMILTON JORDAN. HE WAS INTERESTED IN KNOWING ABOUT THEIR WORKING HABITS, LIFE STYLE AND THE TASK THEY PERFORM FOR PRESIDENT CARTER.

III. ABOUT ICA

- THE NEW THRUST OF ICA WAS THE SUBJECT OF ADDRESSES BY THE PAO BEFORE TWO ROTARY GROUPS (SAN JUAN AND PANDAY PIRA). STRESS WAS ON THE TWO-WAY INFORMATION AND CULTURAL FLOW IN BOTH SPEECHES; AND POST RESOURCES (VTR, PERIODICALS, AND OTHER LIBRARY MATERIALS) IN SUPPORT OF CP

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OBJECTIVES WERE PUSHED. ALTHOUGH THE PRESS BILL BEFORE THE IBP DID NOT COME UP IN EITHER SESSION, THERE WAS MUCH TALKING AROUND IT, ESPECIALLY AS QUESTIONS OF US PRESS FREEDOM AROSE. OTHER RESULTS OF THESE TALKS WERE SEVERAL ADDITIONS TO THE LIBRARY MEMBERSHIP ROLLS AND CANDIDATES FOR ARS. DAWSON

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